

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Claim Amendments

The Applicants have amended claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 33; and claims 3, 6, 8, 9, 21, 24, and 26 have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10-12, 14, 15, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27-31, 33, 35, and 36 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the conditional allowance of claims 29-31, 33, 35, and 36. Claim 33 has been amended to correct an informality.

3.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 14-15 and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Butler, et al. (US 2003/0012183). The Applicants have amended the claims to better distinguish the claimed invention from Butler. The Examiner's consideration of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

The Examiner stated that claims 9-11, and 26-28 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, the Applicant has amended claims 1 to incorporate all the limitations of claim 9 and any intervening claim. In addition, the Applicant has amended claim 20 to incorporate all the limitations of claim 26 and any intervening claim. Claims 3 and 21 have been canceled.

Claims 2, 4, 14, and 15 depend from amended claim 1 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Claims 22 and 23 depend from amended claim 20 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 20. Therefore, the allowance of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 14, 15, 20, 22, and 23 is respectfully requested.

4.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 6-8, 12, 24 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Butler in view of Mauger, et al. (US 6917586). The Applicants have amended the claims to better distinguish the claimed invention from Butler and Mauger. The Examiner's consideration of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

The Examiner stated that claims 9-11, and 26-28 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, the Applicant has amended claims 1 to incorporate all the limitations of claim 9 and any intervening claim. In addition, the Applicant has amended claim 20 to incorporate all the limitations of claim 26 and any intervening claim. Claims 6, 8, and 24 have been canceled.

Claims 7 and 12 depend from amended claim 1 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Claim 25 depends from amended claim 20 and recites further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 20. Therefore, the allowance of claims 7, 12, and 25 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants believe all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10-12, 14, 15, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27-31, 33, 35, and 36.

The Applicants request a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,

/Michael Cameron, #50,298/

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Michael Cameron
Registration No. 50,298

Ericsson Inc.
6300 Legacy Drive, M/S EVR 1-C-11
Plano, Texas 75024

(972) 583-4145
michael.cameron@ericsson.com